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Viewing cable 05KINGSTON655, LABOR MINISTER DALLEY ON SEAGA, GENERAL ELECTION,

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
05KINGSTON655	2005-03-08 18:55	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Kingston

Appears in these articles:

<http://jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20110527/lead/lead1.html>

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KINGSTON 000655

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR WHA/CAR (BENT)
SOUTHCOM FOR POLAD AND J7 (RHANNAN)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/07/2015
TAGS: [JM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ELAB](#) [CMGT](#) [CVIS](#)
SUBJECT: LABOR MINISTER DALLEY ON SEAGA, GENERAL ELECTION,
AND LABOR DISPUTES

REF: A. KINGSTON 00458

[1](#)B. KINGSTON 00253
[1](#)C. 04 KINGSTON 02898
[1](#)D. KINGSTON 00640

Classified By: P/E Mark Powell, Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

Summary

[1](#)1. (U) On February 24, Emboffs met with Labor Minister Horace Dalley, who shared his views on former Jamaica Labor Party (JLP) leader Edward Seaga's departure from politics and the succession issues within the People's National Party (PNP). He also discussed his view of the party's platform in advance of Jamaica's upcoming general election (due by October 2007), commented on recent difficulties he has faced with local labor unions, and expressed concern about the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's recent cap on H-2B visas.

Dalley on Seaga and the JLP

[1](#)2. (C) Poloff, Pol/Econ Chief, and visiting INR analyst met with Horace Dalley, Minister of Labor and Social Security, on February 24. Dalley commented on the previous weekend's Jamaica Labor Party (JLP) annual conference (septel), and described himself as an avid admirer of

long-time JLP leader Edward Seaga. Dalley claimed to have made a close study of Seaga during Seaga's political career, adding that he owns a transcript of every speech the former leader has made. Dalley added that Prime Minister Patterson has also closely studied Seaga, and that "PJ knows Seaga better than Seaga knows himself." Dalley recounted his attendance at a recent farewell reception for Seaga. He said that many in Seaga's inner circle were critical of "insincere" reformist JLP members who had recently praised Seaga's career in Parliament, when in fact they were happy to see him go. Dalley went on to say that Seaga was forced out by certain elements within the JLP, and that he was not ready to step down.

13. (C) Dalley said with some confidence that the government would not call for by-elections in West Kingston until at least April, given the busy parliamentary schedule in the next several weeks. West Kingston is Seaga's former constituency that seems certain to choose Golding as its new MP, giving Golding a much-needed seat in Parliament, a constitutional requirement for Golding to assume the official title of Leader of the Opposition.

Patterson's Days Numbered

14. (C) On February 21 and 22, Dalley attended a cabinet retreat, of which he said the main focus was the national budget. Dalley acknowledged the widely held belief that the meeting was Patterson's last budget planning session, and speculated that the prime minister would, in fact, step down before 2006. In addition to the Caribbean Court of Justice, which is now being hotly debated, Dalley indicated that the PNP intends to table several other issues for discussion in Parliament, including capital punishment, term limits, republican status for Jamaica, and fixed election dates.

Portia Still Popular

15. (C) Dalley appeared to continue to support the candidacy of National Security Minister Peter Phillips to succeed Patterson as party leader and prime minister. Dalley denied that the February 5 PNP vice presidential election was a barometer for the leadership race (Ref A). He speculated that Portia Simpson Miller is still the popular favorite, and that she finished second to surprise winner Karl Blythe only because not as many of Simpson Miller's delegates attended the February 5 vote. He maintains that she would have received many more votes had the vote been held at the party conference on January 22.

Doing Battle with Labor Groups

16. (C) Dalley explained that he had met earlier in the day with the Prime Minister and labor unions to settle a lingering dispute over striking workers (Ref B). Dalley did not go into the details of the meeting, but did not appear to be overly concerned with the issue, despite previous threats by the labor unions to call for his job. On February 25, the media reported that the parties had reached a favorable settlement. Of his labor portfolio, Dalley joked that he couldn't understand why the JLP was so anxious to take over the government, since going to work at the labor ministry was like going into combat every day. Dalley has previously mentioned that he may consider retirement following the next general election (Ref C).

Dalley Concerned by U.S. Labor Cap

17. (SBU) Dalley again expressed his concern that thousands of Jamaican seasonal workers could lose their jobs this year, following the enforcement of a cap on H-2B work visas. He asked Emboffs to look into the status of a proposed U.S. bill that would exempt certain workers. Dalley, however, spoke enthusiastically about the job prospects that new hotel developments and the upcoming Cricket World Cup would bring to the country. He also mentioned investment interest on the part of the Government of China, which he

said plans to invest in the Sabina Park and Greenfields cricket grounds in Kingston and Trelawney, respectively.

Aristide Was "a Friend in Need"

18. (C) Making the same argument he has made in the past, Dalley described the GOJ's relationship with Haiti and Aristide as "just helping a friend in need who asked for assistance." He said that some within the cabinet believed that Washington had overreacted to the GOJ decision to allow Aristide to visit Jamaica "for family reasons." In making these comments, Dalley emphasized that he was offering his personal views, not speaking on foreign affairs issues on behalf of the GOJ. He assured Emboffs that the GOJ was not taking an adversarial position to the U.S. by extending Aristide an invitation to stay on the island for several weeks. He added that a condition of the stay was that Aristide keep a low profile and refrain from making public statements while he was in Jamaica. P/E Chief acknowledged that Dalley had offered his remarks on Haiti as reflecting a personal perspective. He then reminded the minister that the GOJ had indeed acted unhelpfully during the 2004 political crisis in Haiti, including by publicly accepting at face value Aristide's unfounded allegations about a U.S. role in his downfall, and by remaining largely unengaged in resolving the crisis nearly a year after Aristide's voluntary resignation and departure.

Comment

19. (C) Dalley's professed respect for Seaga demonstrates the former opposition leader's iconic status in Jamaica after 43 years of parliamentary service, and perhaps betrays the labor minister's conservative leanings; Dalley described himself as "Texan" (i.e., in favor) on the issue of capital punishment. His comments on the circumstances surrounding Seaga's departure from politics and the JLP's inner strife tracks with comments we have heard from JLP officials (Ref D) and the news media. Many of the issues (particularly term limits, fixed election dates, and republican status) that Dalley says the PNP plans to table in parliament are precisely those which senior JLP officials have said Golding intends to raise in the coming months. Golding, however, has championed these issues since his departure from the JLP in 1995. End Comment.
ROBINSON